

**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation  
Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation**

**Topic:** Building Successful Partnerships

**Session number:** 36

**Facilitator:** Linda Kucera

**Morning**

**Location:** 124

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

A lot of discussion covered themes already well-expressed at the conference such as development of trust, sharing, shared vision, openness, voluntary participation, recognition, solving common problems, getting buy-in, and early engagement, cooperation not regulation, collaboration not confrontation.

A number of other themes emerged during discussion. Some new ideas were no unfunded mandates, motivate not mandate, provide resources (e.g. dollars, people, in-kind support) to further partnerships Also noted-

Identify the links between different interests/cultures, and use those links to create new ways of shared thinking, such as “Marines can go to war for conservation”

Creativity and innovation was stressed. We should look for new creative solutions.

Leaders must be good communicators and model collaboration.

Look for types of people who makes things work, e.g. “mavens, “salespeople”, and “connectors”.

Find practical ways to reach large-scale goals with attainable increments.

Manage expectations up front in terms of time, level of effort, and results

Celebrate, have fun, thank people that participate.

All stakeholders need to be held accountable.

Need to be mindful of the press and how it can help or hinder partnerships.

**B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO’s, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Promote monetary incentives for partnerships.

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Create a protocol for flexibility in rules pertaining to partnerships.

The Department of Interior and EPA need to better communicate and model the principles and policies for partnership. There needs to be consistency and follow-through among Federal regional offices. USDA and EPA need to resolve agricultural issue conflicts created by the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, CERCLA and RCRA.

We need clear definitions across the Government for terms such as farm, grasslands, rangeland, and CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation).

We should have a “one-stop shop” in each Federal region coordinating information and providing accessible entry for conservation and environmental issues and programs.

Recognize and reward Federal employees who demonstrate collaborative skills.

Federal agencies should have to document in-kind partner support in order to get full annual appropriations.

We need strategic plans for agriculture/conservation/environment for 10 years, 50 years, and 100 years.

We need a Government-wide policy statement on partnering principles and competencies needed to implement them.

C. **Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations.*  
*Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Promote a transfer of knowledge among local groups about successes, including field trips from one region to another.

Make better use of the Corporation for National Service Agencies for promoting conservation in communities.

Share these conference materials on as many existing state and regional networks as possible.

D. **Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group’s discussion.

“The people with the most at stake need to be full participants and engaged participants”.

“Formalizing something may kill it – work informally, below the radar.”

“Talk story” -- more personal interchange at local gathering places.

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Topic: **Building Successful Partnerships**

Session Number: **36**

**Morning, Rm. 125**

**Facilitator:** Robin Roberts; **Compiler:** Nicole Clowery; **Note-taker:** Phil Lawson

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion**

For Success:

- Need inspiring, clearly stated, compelling vision.
- Focus on what the group has in common, rather than their differences.
- Clearly establish expectations for each partner's roles, responsibilities, and contributions.
- Partners need to have willingness to work for the good and glory of the goal, rather than for their own accolades
- Must have an implementation and funding strategy
- Have a balance of short term goals that can be achieved along the way to the long-term goals
  - ◊ Gives stakeholders a sense of accomplishment, momentum
- Institutions need to match their actions with their words, adapting new tools for new times and allowing and encouraging federal policies to allow for local based management
- Much success is due to good leaders who have been trained in and believe in collaborative approaches
  - ◊ But staff level leaders don't always embrace leaders' beliefs in collaborative conservation
- Actively engage your critics – keeping your friends close and your enemies closer
- Better nurturing of existing programs (with funds, staff, advertisement, etc.) rather than continuous

Barriers:

- Partners all have different processes and cultures– this can be frustrating
- Lack of dedicated staff, from all partners
- Not enough \$\$
- Federal Partners and their lack of transparency in partnering (managing expectations)
- Federal processes and policies are outdated and not inline with the new model of cooperative conservation
- A currently apathetic nation
- Agencies don't communicate within or amongst themselves
- Stove-piping

**B. National-level Practical Actions**

- Need to encourage risk taking inside federal agencies, respecting and rewarding such thinking and the employees who pursue these values
- Seek to incorporate cooperative conservation in federal agency culture

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- National level needs to respect community level management and implement collaborative/local based management and allow for flexible ‘place based’ solutions’
- Adapt federal policies to allow for locally-tailored conservation BMPs
- Federal level needs to actually walk their talk, and commit \$\$, staff time, and attitudes
- Revamp federal policies and measurement systems to become better in line with current cooperative conservation model – these policies need to allow middle managers to fully implement the stated desires of top leadership
- Allow for failure and, rather than condemning failure, focus on lessons learned
- Better align top level funding schemes to match (have a budget line item for restoration)
- NGOs also need to embrace collaborative processes, and not fall back on old ways (lawsuits)
- Consider ‘frivolous’ lawsuit standards for NGO, business and other institutions
- Develop cost effective market driven incentives
- Require ongoing participation in on-going process (e.g., NEPA) in order to file lawsuit later on
- Lower cost-share, or allow for larger in-kind incentives
- Monitor and measure cooperative conservation efforts via outcomes (how many partners, were there links to community-based plans, jobs created, etc.)
- Create means by which to maximize NGO participation

### **C. Local-level Practical Actions**

- Local level federal agencies need to better work together and coordinate with each other (for example, NOAA, FS, EPA)
- Share the success stories so other communities, districts, etc; know what worked as well as lessons learned when something didn’t work
- Better communication within local entities (is the planning department talking to the facilities department, etc.)
- Clearly state the need that the partnership is seeking to address
- Provide upward feedback to decision makers and policy makers – effectively lobbying for change
- Engage local business and private stakeholders – look to them for funding assistance
- State entities can work well and directly with local entities to identify and report upward on what cooperative conservation efforts are working
- States can develop tax schema to provide for private sector incentives

### **D. Particularly Insightful Quotes**

“We will never be able to institutionalize this until we see tools for the top levels to fully implement these ideas and actions.”

“We are talking about celebrating stories – not only metrics.”

“Tell me something and I’ll probably forget it, show me something and I may remember it, involve me in it, and I’ll understand it.”

“Whenever you are faced with barriers on any partnership – always turn to your vision.”

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**Session number:** 36

**Facilitator:** Carl Moore

**Morning**

**Location:** 126

- A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

The group agreed that there are certain critical factors that are essential to partnerships

1. Communications/listening
2. developing trust
  - a. know partners
  - b. develop relationships
3. overlapping purpose/vision/goals [Venn Diagram]
4. resources – money,
5. sustain/commitment
6. right people
7. leadership
8. equal access to/shared information; learn together
9. the partnership has to define the roles rather than an institutionalized approach

- B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

1. follow-up regional conferences to showcase success stories
2. no lip service to environmentalism = a commitment to dedicate real resources to support partnerships
3. set partnership related agency goals and measure progress against them
4. draft an executive order on partnership across government
5. amend FACA so it cannot be used as an impediment to partnerships
6. develop and approach to support partnerships by determining that consensus trumps agency political agendas / “don’t pull the rug” from out of the partnership
7. create incentives to make participation attractive to private organizations (e.g. something from agencies – improved relations, changed rules, stock rating grading)
8. access (use and interpretation) to technical information (e.g. mapping data) and experts
9. agency training on what is entailed in incentives for partnerships

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**C. Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

1. give priority to partnerships in allocating non-federal resources
2. change organizational policies and cultures to support partnerships
3. fully empowerment to representatives
4. build a “business case” on why partners should participate (may not be financial)

**D. Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group’s discussion.

“Partnerships are kind of like a marriage; it does not take much to break them up but it takes a lot to keep them going.”

“Beware of institutionalization of an approach to partnerships because that feels like it is too to-down driven.”

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**Session number:** 36

**Facilitator:** Paul De Morgan

**Morning**

**Location:** 127

**A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

1. Develop a shared vision that can be communicated broadly is essential.
2. Ensure that sharing experiences and celebrating successes is an ongoing aspect of your partnership so that 1) others can learn; and 2) the group can build common ownership.
3. Make sure your successes are real.
4. Pay attention to the whole story.
5. Do not come to the table with preconceived notions.
6. Do not make decisions before involving all stakeholders.
7. Make sure that all interests are represented.
8. Everyone brings different strengths to the table which should be utilized.
9. Do not 'institutionalize' partnership mechanism.
10. Fostering cooperative conservation partnerships should not be an excuse to cut budgets.
11. The role of the federal government is support these types of endeavors through a variety of mechanisms including funding, technical assistance, and active support and/or participation.

**B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

1. Encourage national level ownership of regional level participation in partnerships
2. Encourage conservation partnership culture at all levels of the agencies.
3. Solve the disconnect between conservation policy and agency policies.
4. Incorporate more money/resources into the conservation portion of the Farm Bill
5. Identify dollars specifically for conservation efforts
6. Identify and support 'champions' within the agency and within the community.
7. When funding projects, be less prescriptive about how the deliverables are met.
8. In creating grant programs, lay out broad goals and objectives but allow partnerships at the local level to define their priorities and approaches.
9. Create mechanisms that allow for easier transfer of funds for collaboration between federal agencies.
10. Encourage use of existing mechanism for collaboration (e.g., Coordinated Resource Management approach)

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**C. Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

1. Get involved in the Farm Bill process.
2. Create grant programs at the state level with criteria that require matching funds and partnerships.
3. Encourage participation in regional partnerships (cross State border).
4. Be proactive to work/coordinate outside of your organization/agency.
5. Look for opportunities to help agencies be productive.
6. Identify and support champions within agencies.

**D. Particularly insightful quotes from participants** *that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.*

1. "I am here to learn about collaborative partnerships."
2. "Define the destination together."
3. "Tell the story and tell it compellingly."
4. "We don't have cellphones in Blackfoot County and so we're forced to meet face to face."

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